

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims, including all prior versions, with the listing of claims found below.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A central management apparatus for managing devices connected to device management units by data communication with the device management units, the central management apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing [the] a fixed-time transmission time determined for each device;

a setting ~~means-unit~~ for setting an allowable time for each device or each device management unit connected to the devices based on ~~the-a~~ communication method of each device management unit; and

a determination ~~means-unit~~ for determining that a device that has not transmitted data until the allowable time has elapsed after the fixed-time stored in memory is a non-communicating device.

2. (Currently amended) A-The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, further comprising:

a fixed-time transmission time setting ~~means-unit~~ for setting [the] a next fixed-time transmission time for each device; and

a transmission ~~means-unit~~ for transmitting the set fixed-time transmission time to the device management unit connected to each device.

3. (Currently amended) A-The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 2, wherein ~~said~~the fixed-time transmission time setting ~~means-unit~~ sets the next fixed-time transmission time in accordance with the respective communication method of the connected device management unit.

4. (Currently amended) A-The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 2,

wherein ~~said the~~ fixed-time transmission time setting ~~means-unit~~ allots an earlier time to devices having ~~a long an~~ allowable time set by the setting ~~means-unit which is longer~~ than devices having ~~an a short~~ allowable time ~~that is shorter.~~

5. (Currently amended) AThe central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein ~~said the~~ communication ~~methods including~~ method includes a first method for transmitting data over a public telephone line, and a second method for transmitting data by electronic mail over the internet.

6. (Currently amended) AThe central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 5, wherein ~~said the~~ setting ~~meansunit~~ sets the allowable time of the device management unit using the first method of communication ~~so as~~ to be shorter than the allowable time of the device management unit using the second method of communication.

7. (Currently amended) AThe central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 1, wherein said devices are image forming apparatuses.

8. (Currently amended) A central management apparatus for managing devices connected to device management units by data communication with first and second device management units using different communication methods, the central management apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing a first transmission time set for the first device management unit and a second transmission time set for the second device management unit;

a first counting ~~means-unit~~ for counting ~~the~~ elapsed time from the first transmission time when data have not been received from the first device management unit at the first transmission time;

a second counting ~~means-unit~~ for counting ~~the~~ elapsed time from the second transmission time when data have not been received from the second device management unit at the second transmission time;

a threshold setting ~~means-unit~~ for setting a first threshold value for the first device management unit and setting a second threshold value different from the first threshold value for the second device management unit; and

a determining ~~means-unit~~ for determining a no reception condition when the ~~counted~~-elapsed time counted by the first counting ~~means-unit~~ exceeds the first threshold value or the ~~counted~~ elapsed time counted by the second counting ~~means-unit~~ exceeds the second threshold value.

9. (Currently amended) A-The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, further comprising:

a fixed-time transmission time setting ~~means-unit~~ for setting the next fixed-time transmission time for each device; and

a transmission ~~means-unit~~ for transmitting the set fixed-time transmission time to the device management unit connected to each device.

10. (Currently amended) A-The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein ~~said~~the fixed-time transmission time setting ~~means-unit~~ sets the next fixed-time transmission time in accordance with ~~the~~a respective communication method of the connected device management unit.

11. (Currently amended) A-The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, wherein ~~said~~the fixed-time transmission time setting ~~means-unit~~ allots an earlier time to devices having ~~an~~a long allowable time set by the setting ~~means-unit~~ which is longer than devices having ~~a~~a short ~~an~~ allowable time which is shorter.

12. (Currently amended) A-The central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, wherein the communication method of the first device management unit is a method for transmitting data over a public telephone line, and the communication method of the second device management unit is a method for transmitting data by electronic mail over the internet.

13. (Currently amended) AThe central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 12, wherein saidthe threshold setting means-unit sets the threshold value of the first device management unit so as to be shorter than the threshold value of the second device management unit.

14. (Currently amended) AThe central management apparatus as claimed in Claim 8, wherein saidthe devices are image forming apparatuses.

15. (Currently amended) A management system including a central management apparatus, a first device management unit for data communication with the central management apparatus using a first communication method, and a second device management unit for data communication with the central management apparatus using a second communication method, saidthe first device management unit comprising:

a first transmission means-unit for transmitting data relating to a connected device to the central management apparatus at a first fixed time,

saidthe second device management unit comprising:

a second transmission means-unit for transmitting data relating to a connected device to the central management apparatus at a second fixed time,

saidthe central management apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing a first transmission time set for the first device management unit and a second transmission time set for the second device management unit;

a first counting means-unit for counting the elapsed time from the first transmission time when data have not been received from the first device management unit at the first transmission time;

a second counting means-unit for counting the elapsed time from the second transmission time when data have not been received from the second device management unit at the second transmission time;

a threshold setting ~~means-unit~~ for setting a first threshold value for the first device management unit, and setting a second threshold value different from the first threshold value for the second device management unit; and

a determining ~~means-unit~~ for determining a no reception condition when the ~~counted~~-elapsed time counted by the first counting ~~meansunit~~ exceeds the first threshold value or the ~~counted~~-elapsed time counted by the second counting ~~meansunit~~ exceeds the second threshold value.

16. (Currently amended) ~~A~~The management system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein ~~said~~the first communication method is a method for transmitting data over a public telephone line, and ~~said~~the second communication method is a method for transmitting data by electronic mail over the internet.

17. (Currently amended) A management system as claimed in Claim 16, wherein ~~said~~the threshold setting ~~means-unit~~ sets the threshold value of the first device management unit ~~so as~~ to be shorter than the threshold value of the second device management unit.

18. (Currently amended) ~~A~~The management system as claimed in Claim 15, wherein ~~said~~the devices are image forming apparatuses.